

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH October 27, 2009

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 7:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Valerie Zuercher, Mark Rafanelli, Robert Bollengier, and Mary Walsh. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar and Director of Administration Robert V. Ross were present. Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar was absent.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Vice Chair Cicero read the District Mission Statement.

Open Forum – Chair DeSack said she wanted to welcome Boy Scout troop members from Exeter who are here tonight doing their Citizenship in the Community badge.

Presentation – 2009 NECAP Science Results – Superintendent Geismar reminded members that he distributed the 2009 NECAP results to the committee right after he received them about one month ago. In response to Vice Chair Cicero's inquiry, Dr. Geismar

explained that Science Department Chair Matt Savoie was unable to attend tonight's meeting for personal reasons. However, the NECAP Presentation will be brought again to a future agenda and Mr. Savoie will attend at that time. Dr. Geismar referenced the Achievement Level Results-Grades 4, 8, and 11 enclosed in members' supplemental packets and gave a brief overview of the data. He said that Principal Boyce is very proud that there are more Grade 4 students who scored Proficient (Level 3) than previously and that students are well above the state average. Grade 8 numbers also show that Proficient (Level 3) went up slightly and Levels 1 and 2 went down, which is what you want to see. In addition, students are well above the state average again. Principal Thompson reported that the Junior High School was applauded by the state in the report as one school with big movement. He said that he is still not happy with the scores; however, the fact is that of the thousands of students that were tested across the state, very few achieved Level 4. He advised that this is a statewide issue and not just a local issue. Chair DeSack voiced her opinion that in order to understand the results better, the School Committee will need the total presentation. Principal Boyce briefly reported on the NECAP workshop she attended today and the training that teachers received through Gems Net. She expressed her opinion that the training teachers received made a difference in the NECAP results. Principal Butler said he and the science department are disappointed that Grade 11 scores went down 2% from last year. However, this year there was a higher emphasize on Earth Science in the NECAP test and many students have not had Earth Science since

junior high. He pointed out that 40% of the Grade 11 total population would have scored Proficient and above if, they had achieved 3 percentage points more on the test. Principal Butler told the School Committee that he and Mr. Savoie will give a greater interpretation and have a more comprehensive report at the next meeting. Member Bollengier requested that at the next meeting, the presentation

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include an explanation as to why the number of students statewide is decreasing from 2008 to 2009 for each of the age groups that were tested. Principal Thompson offered a colorful report he can provide to School Committee members. Chair DeSack asked Principal Thompson to get that report to the Superintendent so that he can forward it to the School Committee prior to or at the next meeting.

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA- Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

Member Bollengier inquired about the status of the wrestling program at the senior high. Superintendent Geismar said that an advertisement was posted for a head wrestling coach and one very viable candidate has applied.

Member Bollengier made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

The following items were approved:

**A. Approval of Minutes - Regular Minutes of October 13, 2009;
Executive Session Minutes of October 13, 2009**

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments

2. Leaves of Absence

**3. Resignations – (As Recommended by the Superintendent, with
Regret)**

a. Letter of Resignation from Ryan Morgan from his position as Sr.

**High School Assistant Wrestling Coach, effective October 18,
2009**

4. Grievances

5. Non-Renewals

6. Recalls

7. Sabbaticals

**C. Bills – In the amount of \$148,288.59; Accruals in the amount of
\$2,100**

D. Home School Approvals

End Consent Agenda

**Correspondence – (1) School Committee Meeting Dates 2010; (2) East
Greenwich School Committee Resolution passed on October 5, 2009;
(3) October 15, 2009 RI Department of Environmental Management
Letter to Superintendent Geismar Regarding Underground Storage
Tank; (4) Jamestown School Committee Resolution passed on**

September 17, 2009; (5) EWG Sr. High School Profile 2009 – 2010; (6) October 23, 2009 NEWS RELEASE – Commissioner Gist Ends Seniority-Based Teacher Assignments

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Vice Chair Cicero reference Correspondence (2) and requested to add it to the next regular meeting agenda. She suggested that perhaps the School Committee would want to send out the same type of correspondence. Chair DeSack informed Vice Chair Cicero that during her absence from the last two meetings, the School Committee has already done this.

In response to Clerk Coutcher's inquiry regarding Correspondence (6) NEWS RELEASE – Commissioner Gist Ends Seniority-Based Teacher Assignments, Superintendent Geismar said that he had received a letter from the Commissioner that said when the Collective Bargaining Agreement comes up for negotiations, you should not be basing job placement solely on seniority. Dr. Geismar suggested that probably more detail would follow on the legalities. Chair DeSack asked for clarification that the matter would not be negotiated, will be mandated, and will be automatically negotiated out. Superintendent Geismar said that that is what the letter sounded like, but the district will need to see what follows. Chair DeSack asked the

Superintendent to bring more information as it becomes available to the agenda outside of Correspondence for discussion.

Vice Chair Cicero referenced Correspondence (3) and asked about the condition of the piping of the underground storage tank at the high school. Chair DeSack said that this matter should be discussed under agenda item, Capital Project Update.

NEW BUSINESS – DECA Fieldtrip Approval – Vice Chair Cicero made a motion to accept the DECA Fieldtrip. Member Zuercher seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Vice Chair Cicero made a motion to move up on the agenda the H1N2 Update. Member Zuercher seconded the motion.

Member Bollengier asked why the item is being moved up. Vice Chair Cicero explained that there are audience members waiting to speak to this item.

Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

H1N1 Update – Superintendent Geismar said that he invited school nurse-teachers Dawn Seitz and Deb Larkin tonight to help describe the process and answer any questions members may have regarding H1N1. He reported that a spike in absences was noticed at Lineham School yesterday; the weekly reports from the state indicate that

H1N1 is around; and the Department of Health, (DOH) does not want districts to close schools. Mrs. Larkin described the school-based vaccination clinic process and reviewed protocol. Mrs. Seitz informed members of the rise in flu-like symptoms among the student body and talked about attendance monitoring at the state level. Superintendent Geismar reported that vaccinations are free of charge; elementary clinics are in the evening so

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parents can be present, and H1N1 Frequently Asked Questions, (FAQ) are accessible on the district website.

School Nurse-Teacher Sub Pay Rate – Superintendent Geismar advised that the going rate for a substitute nurse-teacher is \$300. He requested to change the per diem rate for nurse-teacher substitutes from \$75 to \$150, which is less than the agency fee. In response to Chair DeSack's question as to why not change the rate to \$125 or \$100, which is the same as some other school districts, Director of Administration Robert Ross advised that unique to this district, it is difficult to get people to travel to EWG schools. He suggested that the district can try for the lower rate, however, presently there is no one in the bank for nurse-teacher substitutes and the district needs to incent people to apply. A brief discussion ensued relating to modifying district policy 6237: Per Diem Substitute Teachers to

include specific language relating to the per diem rate for substitute nurse-teachers. Chair DeSack asked that the policy subcommittee work to make the modifications to policy 6237 and then bring it to the School Committee agenda when ready.

Transportation Update – Director of Administration Robert Ross referenced the 2009 – 2010 Budget – Transportation spreadsheet enclosed in members’ packets and informed members of the projected Statewide Out-of-District Transportation costs, which could result in a projected line item deficit totaling (\$583,694.50). Mr. Ross reported that he received two Statewide Out-of-District Transportation invoices on Friday, October 16. Just prior to that, he had submitted that the district was anticipating an \$80,000 savings. Three days later, he received invoices from the state for the out-of-district and special education transportation. Mr. Ross gave a breakdown of the out-of-district transportation totals and informed members about meetings he had with Ocean State Transportation and Statewide Transportation representatives regarding the invoices. He gave a lengthy, detailed, overall review on the statewide out-of-district transportation program/cost. He said that a full report is forthcoming as this is ongoing and another meeting with the state is set for next week. Chair DeSack referenced Mr. Ross’ spreadsheet and pointed out that the district’s transportation budget without state help was \$2.4 million and with state help is \$3 million. The statewide transportation was supposed to save the district money and at worst break even. Dr. Geismar said those figures are based on the invoices

that Mr. Ross has seen which are not acceptable to the district. That is why the negotiation is going on and Mr. Ross has a meeting on Thursday with the transportation people. Mr. Ross noted that RIDE is acutely aware of this issue, they want to see the program be successful, and they do not want to see this district being punished. Part of the dialogue that will become clearer over the next week or so will be does it make sense for Ocean State Transit to take over some of these runs? Mr. Ross expressed his view that that will be very tenuous discussion because essentially of the two vendors who have bid for the district's business, one will say they cannot do the job and will ask the other for help.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Policies – Review and Adoption – #6203: Family, Maternity, Parental and Medical Leave Policy – Adoption – Member Bollengier moved to approve Policy 6203: Family, Maternity, parental and Medical Leave Policy. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Commissioner's Review Update – Superintendent Geismar, Principal Butler, and Principal Thompson updated members on the events that took place during the commissioner's review team visit to the Jr. – Sr. High School yesterday. Principal Butler reported that he will not hear

back officially on the site visit for two weeks. The team will give the district back its report for review. Principal Butler will then share the report with Dr. Geismar and department chairs for verification. Principal Butler reported that during his exit interview with the team, the director of the site visit said she could not believe the growth that the high school has undertaken since the last visit. Principal Butler said that he is proud to announce that the team was so impressed with the district's ILP process and all the advisory pieces that they asked if that can be used as a state model or can be considered as a state model. They were equally impressed with the science template for Common Task Development. They asked if that too could be shared with other districts. Principal Butler said that he anticipates a very positive final report and he looks forward to sharing it when it is written in January. He expressed his opinion that the high school has a great faculty and the student body is very impressive. He said that the educational community rallied around each other and it was very powerful. He expressed special accolades to his assistant Chris Anthony who was a significant contributor to the success of this visit.

Chair DeSack left the meeting at this time, (8:01 p.m.).

Capital Project Update – Superintendent Geismar updated members on the capital project work that continues throughout the district on all heating systems, security systems, Metcalf's water system, and the underground oil tank at the Jr. – Sr. High School. Director of Administration Robert Ross said that when the underground oil tank

was exposed to fix the puncture, the return, fill, and vent piping had to be exposed. It has been suggested that the district repair the piping. However, the estimate from RI Hydraulics to repair is \$11,500 and the earliest they can get to that repair is December.

Chair DeSack returned to the meeting at this time, (8:05 p.m.).

Mr. Ross informed members that there has been discussion that the Building Committee is at a point where it is trying to stop spending in order to get an account of where the capital project budget sits so not to overspend. He reminded members that after this project is complete, it is still part of the responsibility of his office to do the 5-year Capital Asset Plan. Therefore, the district could move this piping project to that plan and roll that forward. Mr. Ross suggested that is probably a prudent course of action given what the district needs to do to finish this project. He reminded members that the original

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Metcalf water system project was part of the bond for that tank to be relined. Once that work began, they realized the tank had been compromised due to erosion. Now it became instead of relining that tank a total different project. That project is going to have substantial billing and that may need to come outside of the bond project. Therefore, as things do not get done in the bond, they will fall into the

Capital Asset Plan. Mr. Ross said that he is waiting to see where the district is on the projects as far as the budget goes and RIDE will certainly work with the district to either put some of these projects into the bond if the money is there or take them out and into the Capital Fund if necessary. In response to Vice Chair's inquiry regarding the poor condition and longevity of the oil tank piping, Mr. Ross said that DEM suggests the pipes be replaced. The longevity of the pipes may be 5 to 10 years, but the intent would be to go back to check within 5-years. He gave his opinion that the real issue the district is going to be facing going forward is the reality of controlling costs. Chair DeSack pointed out that there is Capital Fund money and Bond money available right now without asking taxpayers for any more money. Mr. Ross said that the big issue for him is the oil tank will be exposed until December because the company is not available to do the work until then. Members briefly discussed Capital Funds spent on the steel building at the track and set as a placeholder for the access road pavement. Member Bollengier voiced his observation that the weather in probably one month will freeze and destroy the underground pipes on the athletic field due to the ongoing drainage issues. Following a brief discussion, Chair DeSack recommended placing a call to the sprinkler company to have them winterize the pipes.

Reports/Comments – None

Important Dates and Meetings – Wednesday, September 23,

**2009-Building Committee Meeting; Wednesday, September 30,
2009-Building Committee Meeting; Thursday, October 8, 2009-Town
Finance/Charter Review Committee Meeting; Tuesday, October 13,
2009-School Committee Meeting; Tuesday, October 27, 2009-School
Committee Meeting**

EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – None

**Adjournment - Member Bollengier moved to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.
Member Zuercher seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. Meeting
adjourned 8:25 p.m.**

**ROBIN CERIO
CLERK**